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DEPARTMENT FOR OES/IHB

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SUBJECT: BIOTERRORISM: ENHANCING BILATERAL EFFORTS

REFS: A. 2006 MOSCOW 4312

[B](#). 2006 STATE 98525

[C](#). 2006 STATE 178100

[D](#). STATE 30370

[E](#). STATE 112547

Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

[1](#). (SBU) SUMMARY: Department biodefense experts met in Moscow October 10 to discuss bilateral bioterrorism cooperation with the MFA Department of New Threats and Challenges. MFA reported some confusion about the topics and experts needed for a proposed second bilateral meeting of bioterrorism experts to be held under the auspices of CTWG. MFA supports the idea of a separate bilateral meeting of WMD experts in Washington on or about December 7. END SUMMARY.

[2](#). (U) On October 10, Marc Ostfield and Lindsey Hillesheim of the Department's Office of International Health and Biodefense (OES/IHB) and Embassy Science Officer met with Vladimir Titorenko, Deputy Director of the MFA's Department of New Challenges and Threats (DNV), and Vladimir Prokhorov, DNV officer, to discuss bilateral cooperation on bioterrorism under the U.S.-Russia Counterterrorism Working Group (CTWG). The discussion provided a useful introduction for Titorenko to Ostfield, the U.S. POC on bilateral cooperation on combating bioterrorism, and allowed an opportunity for U.S. officials to hear Russian thoughts about potential next steps in this work.

[3](#). (SBU) Titorenko indicated that there was some confusion on the Russian side as to the new format and included topics of the CTWG. He understood that in the most recent meeting between U/S Burns and Deputy Foreign Minister Kislyak, there had been no mention of any CTWG-related issues. Titorenko hoped the anticipated November meeting in Brussels between Special Representative Anatoly Safonov and U.S. Counterterrorism Coordinator Ambassador Dell Dailey would allow for discussion of CTWG content and structure and help clear up any GOR confusion.

[4](#). (SBU) Echoing GOR statements over the past few years (Ref. A), Titorenko gave the familiar refrain that bioterrorism is "a virtual threat", explaining that "it's not like putting a bomb near the Minister." He added that "a biological weapon is one of rich countries not poor countries," since poor countries, even with advanced knowledge are not able to produce anything but "primitive" biological weapons.

[5](#). (SBU) Addressing the longstanding U.S. proposal (Refs. B-D) to hold a second bilateral meeting of bioterrorism experts under CTWG auspices as a follow-on to the productive Moscow meeting in 2006 (Ref. A), Titorenko said that GOR technical agencies had difficulty delineating the difference between bioterrorism, state-run biological weapons programs, and legitimate research into biological agents either for scientific knowledge or to develop medical

countermeasures (e.g., vaccines) and thus were unsure what sort of experts, from a range of sectors, should be involved in the proposed bilateral bioterrorism meeting. Titorenko suggested that a letter from the U.S. side spelling out the kind of GOR interagency expert participation envisioned would help move things forward in Moscow, preferably if conveyed prior to or at the anticipated Safonov-Dailey meeting in November.

¶16. (U) Titorenko also echoed the message the State Department received in September about a possible bilateral meeting of WMD experts in Washington on or about December 7. As Russia sees it, this meeting would help move forward CTWG work in this area once CTWG content and structure are finalized. The Russian proposal for such a CTWG-related meeting in Washington is convenient since Russian WMD experts from several technical agencies are traveling to Canada in early December as part of Russia-Canada work on WMD. Given the unique nature of bioterrorism, Titorenko indicated that a separate bioterrorism-related meeting in DC at that time might be useful.

¶17. (SBU) On another bioterrorism-related issue, Prokhorov briefly discussed GOR views of the United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs (UNDDA) July meeting in New York on setting up a possible bio-incident database (Ref. E). The GOR is concerned that this may be a duplication of effort with respect to the mechanisms in place as part of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) (although he noted that the BWC has "no control mechanism") and that Russian experts were concerned about the lack of definition as to what constitutes a bio-incident (for example, where hoaxes fit in).

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